

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



May 15, 2008

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire,

It is vital to many of our Washington communities that adequate long-term service is restored to the Port Townsend-Keystone ferry route. We supported the decision not to build a new *Steilacoom II* vessel and instead proceed with design and construction of two *Island Home* vessels. As the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system works on design of these new boats, we are greatly concerned that the boats will not be designed or constructed with enough capacity to accommodate future growth on this route. Our constituents and taxpayers deserve the right boat at a reasonable price and we urge you to seriously look at how WSF is handling the design of the *Island Homes*.

During a conference call last Friday, WSF officials discussed the *Island Home* design and informed us that WSF is designing the boat to hold 60-64 vehicles instead of the original design that holds 74 vehicles. The stated reason for scaling down the boat design is for "cost savings." While we certainly agree that we need to look for cost savings in vessel procurement, we must also ensure taxpayer dollars are used wisely and that these boats meet future demand on this route. The department's current policy is to keep boats in service for 60 years and WSF predicts that vehicle demand on the Port Townsend-Keystone route will grow by 61 percent between now and 2030. Even accounting for declines in demand from 2000-2006, vehicle demand on this route will still grow by 51 percent by 2030.

A preliminary estimate by WSF officials indicated not adding the extra vehicle capacity could save about \$1 million per boat. We should be designing these boats to meet future demand today, not with less capacity than the *Steel Electric* boats that held 59-64 vehicles before taken out service. Our constituents and other state taxpayers are being asked to spend at least \$35-40 million for each *Island Home* vessel. The cost savings from not adding the additional vehicle capacity appear to be minimal, but will be substantial when the state decides to retrofit the boats in the future.

We are also concerned about the timeline for delivery of the *Island Homes*. While we appreciate WSF's efforts to move forward with design of the vessel, given that we have decided not to build the *Steilacoom II*, WSF should be focusing all available resources to make any design modifications so that construction can begin as quickly as possible, preferably in the next few

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months. The nearly two-year construction timeline now envisioned is undesirable, and all efforts should be made to accelerate the delivery of these vessels.

We are committed to restoring dependable, long-term service that meets the community's needs on the Port Townsend-Keystone route. We must build a boat that not only meets today's needs, but also meets future demand, and must realize that the decisions we make today will have lasting consequences for the next 60 years. At this critical time, it is important that we avoid cutting corners, and focus on doing the job right the first time. We look forward to your prompt response to these issues of concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norma Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Norma" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Smith".

Norma Smith
State Representative
10th Legislative District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bailey".

Barbara Bailey
State Representative
10th Legislative District

cc: Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation
David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Ferries Division